

### **Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

#### Listing of Claims

1. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) A method of producing aluminum fuel particles having improved ignitability and burn rate, comprising treating the aluminum fuel particles with an aqueous solution of hydrofluoric acid and at least one of (i) a fluoride and (ii) a complex fluoride of at least one of an alkali metal and an alkaline earth metal to form a surface layer of a fluoride complex bound to the aluminum fuel particles.
2. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein an alkaline earth metal ion is added to the aqueous solution in a final stage of the treatment.
3. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium, rubidium, and cesium fluoride.

4. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the complex fluoride is a hexafluoroaluminate or a hexafluorosilicate.

5. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is sodium fluoride and the fluoride complex is cryolite.

6. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is potassium fluoride and the fluoride complex is tripotassium hexafluoroaluminate.

7. (Currently amended) ~~Aluminum fuel particles for A~~ propellant and explosive ~~compositions and pyrotechnic charges, said~~ composition comprising aluminum fuel particles ~~comprising~~ having a surface layer of a fluoride complex provided by treatment of the aluminum particles with an aqueous solution of hydrofluoric acid and ~~at least one of~~ (i) a fluoride ~~and~~ or (ii) a complex fluoride of at least one of an alkali metal and an alkaline earth metal.

8. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is selected from the group consisting of sodium, potassium, rubidium, and cesium fluoride.

9. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, wherein the complex fluoride is a hexafluoroaluminate or a hexafluorosilicate.

10. (Withdrawn - Previously presented) The aluminum fuel particles as claimed in claim 7, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is sodium fluoride and the fluoride complex is cryolite.

11. (Currently amended) The ~~aluminum fuel particles~~ propellant and explosive composition as claimed in claim 7, wherein the alkali metal fluoride is potassium fluoride and the fluoride complex is tripotassium hexafluoroaluminate.